

WEST TISBURY PERSONNEL BOARD
MINUTES
March 8, 2021

Present: Leon Brathwaite James Klingensmith, Hunter Moorman, Rachel Rooney, and Brian Smith

Staff Present: Maria McFarland

Present for all or part of the meeting: Omar Johnson

Leon called the meeting to order via Zoom video conferencing at 5:03PM.

Minutes: The minutes of the February 8, 2021 meeting were approved as written. Roll Call Vote: Brathwaite-aye, Klingensmith-aye, Moorman-aye, Rooney-aye and Smith-aye.

Performance Evaluations: A motion was made by Hunter, seconded by Brian to approve the performance evaluation for Nik Wojtkiello (Police) and Lyn Neilley (Library), each with a one-step increase. Roll Call Vote: Brathwaite--aye, Klingensmith–aye, Moorman-aye, Rooney –aye, and Smith-aye.

Assistant Board of Health Agent: Omar Johnson presented his request for a 4 step increase for the Assistant Board of Health Agent upon his successful completion of the six-month probationary period. His letter dated March 2, 2021 is noted for the record. Omar’s letter details the trainings William has completed in his first six months, all of which are required to be obtained under the job description.

Omar told the board that William is doing a tremendous job. He has shown the ability to learn quickly and is excellent with the public. Has taken over the COVID contact tracing responsibilities. The COVID pandemic has made it clear how important it is to have qualified employees. William has a Master’s Degree in Environmental Health that Omar hopes will be helpful in working on water quality issues with the towns water resources. Omar noted that the job ad provided a salary range, rather than a starting pay rate.

Hunter asked Maria to provide some context to this discussion.

Members were provided with copies of the job application, resume and minutes of the August 25, 2020 meeting, at which the board approved a starting pay rate of Grade 6 step 2. At the time, the board was not aware that the bylaw allows for a candidate with exceptional qualifications to be hired at a higher starting step or after the completion of the six-month probationary period, but not at both times. This process was clarified a few months later when the assessing department asked the board to start the new data collector at grade 3 with a one-step increase after six months. In keeping with Section 7-4 of the bylaw (starting rates for new appointments) the board approved a starting the data collector at step 4.

In response to several of Omar’s points Maria noted that the job ads give the full range of the pay grade as required by bylaw Section 4.3(a), but Section 7-4 states that the person hired shall be paid at the minimum rate except when there is a lack of qualified candidates (there were 19 applicants for this position) or exceptional qualifications.

The minimum qualifications for this position are a High School Diploma or GED and one to three years of public health related experience, or any equivalent combination of education and experience. All applicants are given the job description as part of the application package so they are aware of requirements when they

apply for the position. By comparison, the education requirement for the Health Agent is an Associate's Degree.

The highest starting step for a new hire in the past is step 4 for someone who came to West Tisbury with 20 years of municipal experience.

If the board approves a 4 step increase and then approves a step increase on the employee's anniversary date, that would put this employee at step 7 of an 8-step grade.

Jim commented that the job description calls for 3 years of experience. The employee started with 5 months of experience and has been with the town for 6 months, just shy of a full year's worth of experience.

The special requirements that must be obtained for this position are certification as a Pool and Spa operator, and training for ICS -700 NIMS and, ICS, 100, 200 in accordance with the Town's emergency management plan. Omar replied that William has the ICS 100 and 700. He doesn't have the 200 certifications yet. Jim noted that to qualify for FEMA money the 200 certification is required.

Leon asked if this person has been given more duties than the last person in this position. Maria said this is a new position. The previous person was an administrative clerk.

Hunter thanked Omar for all his work over the last year. He asked Omar if he had had the flexibility could have made a stronger argument at the time of hire to start at a higher step. Omar replied that not having worked with him, he would not have been able to vouch for him and wouldn't have made that request.

Leon commented that the board wanted to started him at 3 but the lack of experience was the issue. He said the position is evolving more than anticipated when the position was created in 2020.

Brian said that if the job is changing than it should be addressed during the next classification study. Leon agreed. The position may need to be reclassified and the department can ask for that to happen. While COVID won't be around forever, the need for Omar to have a qualified person as backup will remain. Omar indicated that the pandemic has shown him how much work a public health crisis falls on the Board of Health.

Leon noted that at the time of hire the board made a commitment to entertain a step increase at this time. If the board had realized they could only do the higher step at the start date or after 6 months, the board may have approved a starting at step 3 in August.

Jim said the lack of experience is a limiting factor. Leon replied that the internships William held while obtaining his Master's Degree could be theoretically counted towards his experience.

Jim said he is not in favor of doing 3 step increases in one year.

Jim made a motion seconded by Brian to approve an increase from step 2 to step 3. Discussion on the motion:

Hunter asked Leon if the employee was promised a step increase after 6 months. Yes, at least a one step increase. Hunter replied that the employee accepted the job knowing this. Hunter added that he would like to be as generous as possible given Omar's recommendations, but the board has to adhere to the

rules. He asked Omar if William expressed his expectations at the time he was hired. Omar replied that he had not.

Maria informed the board that she has had a couple of conversations with the employee both after he was hired and recently.

Omar asked the board what William could expect for an increase on his anniversary date. It would be up to the board at that time, but it is usually a one-step increase.

Brian said the town spends a lot of money on determining the salary scale and the reason people get a step increase is as an incentive to stay with the town.

Rachel recounted how as her position evolved her job description was rewritten and upgraded to reflect the actual work that position does.

Maria provided an example of another employee who started at step 1 and was given a two step increase on their anniversary date.

Leon said the board should approve a step increase and Omar should review the job description to see if there have been significant duties and responsibilities that need to be added to the job description and to bring it back to the board if that is the case.

After the discussion was closed the motion was approved. Roll Call Vote: Brathwaite--aye, Klingensmith--aye, Moorman-aye, Rooney --aye, and Smith-aye.

New Business: Anniversary Date/ Skip Manter: Informal discussion with Skip was tabled to the April meeting at Skip's request. Maria was instructed to ask Skip to put his request in writing.

Old Business: None

Administrative:

Documents noted for the record:

- Approval of vacation carryover for Town Administrator
- Notice of Change of Status/resignation of the Cemetery Superintendent
- Notice of Change of Status/resignation of Wieler/Circulation Assistant

There being no new business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maria McFarland
Board Administrator
APPROVED APRIL 12, 2021